CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic device comprising: a user-interface feature configurable to have a selected orientation about at least a first axis; a detection mechanism to detect orientation information about the electronic device; and one or more components configured to select the orientation of the user-interface feature based on the detected orientation information, and to configure the user-interface feature according to the selected orientation, wherein the selected orientation is based on at least a first reference point on the first axis.

2. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the user-interface feature is symmetrically disposed about a first axis, and wherein the selected orientation defines a reference indication on the first axis.

3. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the user-interface feature is symmetrically disposed about a first axis and a second axis, and wherein the selected orientation defines a first reference indication on the first axis, and a second reference indication on a second axis.

4. The electronic device of claim 2, wherein the user-interface feature includes a display, and wherein the one or more components select the orientation by selecting a top-down direction on the first axis for displaying content on the display.

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5. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the user-interface feature includes a set of buttons disposed symmetrically about the first axis, wherein the one or more components include a processor that selects the orientation of the set of buttons by specifying a reference indication that defines a position of each button relative to the first axis, and wherein the processor assigns a function from a set of functions to each of the plurality of buttons based on the position of each button.

6. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the one or more components include a processor.

7. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein one or more components include a display driver.

8. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the detection mechanism includes a plurality of sensor areas that detect user-contact.

9. The electronic device of claim 8, wherein the plurality of sensor areas detect orientation information by being individually actuatable so that one or more actuated sensor areas form a select portion of the plurality of sensors that combine to define the orientation information.

10. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the detection mechanisms includes a first actuatable surface and a second actuatable surface, wherein orientation information is detected by determining which of the first and second actuatable surface is actuated by user-contact.

11. The electronic device of claim 10, wherein the orientation is selected so as to configure the user-interface feature for left-handedness or right-handedness when one of the first or second actuatable surfaces is actuated.

12. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the user-interface feature is a handwriting input mechanism, and wherein the one or more components include a processor that selects the orientation of the handwriting input mechanism to be either for a left-handed user or a right-handed user depending on the orientation information detected by the detection mechanism.

13. The electronic device of claim 10, wherein the plurality of sensor areas are arranged to detect a user's hand orientation when the user grips the electronic device.

14. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the user-interface feature includes a digital input feature of a display, and wherein the one or more components configure the user-interface feature according to the selected orientation by determining a position of the digital input feature on the display.

15. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the one or more components select the orientation of the user-interface feature based on the detected orientation information only if the electronic device is first determined to not have been in active use for a set duration of time.

16. A method for configuring a electronic device, the method comprising:

detecting at least one user-contact in a plurality of possible detectable user-contacts with the electronic device;

interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature from the detected one or more user-contacts; and

configuring the user-interface feature according to the interpreted orientation.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature from the detected one or more user-contacts includes determining a reference indication of the user-interface feature about one or more axes from the one or more contacts.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising determining reference indication about one or more axes that the user-interface feature is symmetrically disposed about.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein determining the reference indication includes determining a direction for content appearing on a display.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein configuring the user-interface feature according to the interpreted orientation includes assigning an action to each button in a button set using the reference indication.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein detecting at least one user-contact in a plurality of possible detectable user-contacts with the electronic device includes detecting a first button press from a set of at least two or more possible button presses.

22. The method of claim 16, wherein detecting at least one user-contact in a plurality of possible detectable user-contacts with the electronic device includes detecting a grip configuration of a user from one or more sensors on a housing of the electronic device.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature includes determining a top-down vertical orientation for a display on the electronic device, and wherein configuring the user-interface feature includes configuring the display so as to display content according to the top-down vertical orientation.

24. The method of claim 16, wherein interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature includes determining a right-left horizontal orientation for a display on the electronic device, and wherein configuring the user-interface feature includes configuring the display so as to display content according to the right-left horizontal orientation.

25. The method of claim 16, wherein interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature includes identifying the orientation of a digital input mechanism on a display of the electronic device.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein identifying the orientation of a digital input mechanism on a display of the electronic device includes selecting a position of a handwriting input area on the display of the electronic device.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein identifying the orientation of a digital input mechanism on a display of the electronic device includes selecting an arrangement of multiple character entry boxes for the handwriting input area appearing on the display.

28. The method of claim 16, wherein interpreting an orientation for a user-interface feature includes identifying a reference indication for the user-interface feature based on the detected one or more user-contacts.

29. An electronic device comprising:

a display disposed symmetrically about one or more axes, the display being configurable to have a selected orientation based on a reference indication on the one or more axes;

a detection mechanism to detect orientation information of the electronic device in use; and

one or more components configured to automatically determine the reference indication and to select the orientation of the display based on the determined reference indication.

30. The electronic device of claim 28, where the reference indication identifies at least one of a top-down direction or right-left direction of the display.

31. An electronic device comprising:

a set of actuatable surfaces disposed symmetrically about one or more axes, the set of actuatable surfaces being configurable to have a selected orientation based on a reference indication on the one or more axes;

a detection mechanism to detect orientation information of the electronic device in use; and

one or more components configured to automatically determine the reference indication and to select the orientation of the set of actuatable surfaces based on the determined reference indication

32. The electronic device of claim 31, wherein the orientation of the set of actuatable surfaces defines an action assigned to each button in the set of buttons.